Jake's Java Break

Accreditation Tidbits for Medical Staff Members

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JCAHO-Speak: ORYX and Core Measures

What is ORYX? JCAHO ORYX is the name of the Joint Commission initiative that integrates performance measures into the accreditation process. "ORYX" is not an acronym; it is a genus of antelope found in Africa and Arabia. The ORYX initiative is a data-driven, continuous survey and accreditation process that complements JCAHO's standards-based assessment.

What are core measures? Core measures are standardized performance measures that can be applied to accredited organizations in a particular accreditation program. Core measures:

- have precisely defined specifications;
- can be uniformly embedded in multiple performance measurement systems;
- have standardized data collection protocols, based on a uniform medical language;
- meet established evaluation criteria;
- can be implemented in stages within and across accreditation programs;
- permit comparisons of organization performance over time; and
- foster the use of national performance benchmarks.

There are 8,000 core measures hospitals could choose. Core Measure *Sets* were designed to allow valid comparison between hospital organizations based on standardized specifications.

Have Your Say

The Joint Commission is currently seeking measures (indicators) related to medical, surgical, and medical/surgical intensive care units for consideration in an initial set of core measures.

To access the form for your submission, click on Request Core Measures. Follow the link for Request for ICU Core Measures, fill out the form, and submit it before 29 March 02.

Medical Staff Issues

The purpose of **ORYX** is three-fold:

- to provide a critical link between accreditation and patient care outcomes, thus increasing consumer confidence
- to guide and stimulate continuous improvement in patient care and within health care organizations through refinement of performance-based standards
- to review data trends and patterns for continuous monitoring of performance to assist organizations in identifying best practices and issues requiring attention

So, ORYX links accreditation to the hospital's own measures of its performance, helps organizations measure what they do in order to guide and stimulate improvements, and facilitates use of data to identify what works best and what needs attention. Find out what your organization plans to measure.

Core Measure Sets Sets of core performance measures for each accreditation program (hospital, long-term care, etc.) are being identified and implemented in a staggered approach. In early 1999, JCAHO solicited input from a wide variety of stakeholders - clinical professionals, health care provider organizations, state hospital associations, health care consumers, performance measurement experts and others - about potential focus areas for core measures for hospitals. In May 2001, JCAHO announced the four initial core measurement areas for hospitals:

- Acute myocardial infarction
- Heart failure
- Community-acquired pneumonia
- Pregnancy and related conditions

Each Core Measure Set has specific criteria. For a detailed look at ORYX and Core Measure Sets, click on Hospital Core Measures. Generally, hospitals will begin collecting data for two Core Measure Sets for patient discharges beginning 01 July 2002.